

PEOPLE & THINGS

MR. SAM RAYBURN, more because of his personal qualities than because he is Speaker of the House, is the second most powerful man in Washington. His tongue is certainly the sharpest.

The other day, at a White House luncheon for a handful of President Eisenhower's particular friends in Congress, he told how he went to see Truman on the day he was so suddenly catapulted into the White House—the day President Roosevelt died. "There are two dangers every President should beware of," he told Truman. "The first is the 'palace guard' which surrounds him and often takes his name and his power in vain; and the second is flattery, for he will hear on all sides that he is the greatest President the United States has ever had—which is never true."

Eisenhower was laughing heartily at Rayburn's story when the Speaker turned to him and said gravely: "And the same of course, Mr. President, applies to you."

Cousteau Sails

COMMANDER COUSTEAU'S programme of adventure for this year is already under way and the Calypso, refitted by the French Navy, sailed recently from Marseilles for the Seychelles where she is just about due.

The main object of the voyage is under-water photography which will centre on the Aldabra Islands, that biological treasure house on which Cousteau hopes the Colonial Office will build a marine biological research station.

Meanwhile James Dugan, Cousteau's friend and author of "The Great Iron Ship," is collaborating with Cousteau on the whole story of the Calypso's adventures and this will in due course be published by Hamish Hamilton as a successor to "The Silent World."

The Sunken Galley

WHEN Cousteau returns in the late summer to Marseilles he will be in time to wind up the excavation of the famous sunken galley near the Grand Congloué. Work on the 2,000-year-old galley was suspended during the winter for technical reasons, but Cousteau's second team is now diving again and the City Fathers of Marseilles have just agreed to erect a museum devoted entirely to the galley and its contents, which have long since overpowered the Musée Borely.

The new museum will contain a full-scale model of the after-part of the galley and the choicest from among the 9,000 amphorae and the 15,000 pieces of fine pottery which have so far been salvaged.

Of the latter, the more recent finds have been signed and dated, and it is hoped that the last stage of the work at the bottom of the galley's hold may yield even richer treasures.

Devious Means

A RECENT advertisement in the "Personal" column of this newspaper throws an interesting insight on the climate of opinion in North America.

"Wanted: a Russian Type-writer" was inserted by a girl in Canada who was studying the language and who feared the F.B.I. might start a scare with the "Mounties" if she took the

By ATTICUS

normal course and advertised for a machine in America.

Four replies were promptly received and a steam-age Blick with the full pre-Revolutionary alphabet was purchased for £5. and is now on its way across the Atlantic.

FREEHOLDERS Rape of Bramber, WORTHY ELECTORS Borough of Shoreham.

GENTLEMEN,

At the instance of many respectable Electors, I beg leave to offer myself as a Candidate to become one of your Representatives in Parliament.

Though personally unknown to many of you, I trust the Political Principles of my Family (which I am proud to avow) are well known to all of you, and to whom I solemnly submit. In offering myself to your choice, I cordially admit that I do so in Opposition to Sir Cosmo D'Oyly; and should I be placed, by your suffrages, in the high situation in which I aspire, I pledge myself you shall ever find me the staunch Defender of our true Constitutional Rights, and the promoter of your local interests.

If, from the near approach of the Day of Election, I may be useful personally to certain of the whole, I trust it will not be considered an undignified any part, or degrade me of a single Vote.

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

With great respect,

Your very faithful and obedient Servant,

HENRY WEBSTER.

Brighton, April 1, 1888.

"Autre Temps . . ."

IT is pleasant to turn from the hurly-burly of the modern election to the courteous appeal by Mr. Webster in 1820 to the worthy electors of the Rape of Bramber.

However cynical his motives and however suspect the humility of his peroration, Mr. Webster's graceful address has more impact than most of the stuff that has been reaching us all in the post recently.

The Maestro

ARTURO TOSCANINI, "eighty-eight and hating it" as he describes himself, is now in New York, at Riverdale, his home on the Hudson River, sitting in the sun and editing the whole range of his recorded music. He spends all his days listening to his records and approving or suppressing them with the help of his son Walter and his grandson Walfredo, a Yale graduate. In due course his "Collected Works," representing all he wishes to preserve of his recorded music, will be issued with his seal upon them.

He still follows the affairs of La Scala with keen interest and gave his full blessing to the appointment of Victor de Sabata as Artistic Director of the great opera house over which he himself ruled so long.

For this month's inauguration of the "Little Scala," an annexe to La Scala, Toscanini had agreed to conduct Verdi's "Falstaff," and, though his doctor has vetoed the engagement, the maestro remains as unpredictable as ever.

The Wonder Drug

AFTER taking four-tenths of a gramme of mescaline, Aldous Huxley was "shaken out of the rut of ordinary perception" into the brilliant and exhilarating world of the spirit which he describes in "The Doors of Perception," and my researches show that there is nothing to prevent me growing my

own mescaline and making a similar experiment.

Mescaline has for centuries been taken by the Mexican Indians, who obtain it by chewing the desert cactus, *lophophora williamsii*, and Sir Edward Salisbury, Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens, tells me that there are several specimens at Kew and that the cactus can be grown slowly but readily in greenhouse conditions.

A Pipe Dream?

THE leading cactus specialist had not got this particular variety in stock and, while he helpfully told me that relaxed restrictions make it possible to import the cactus from Mexico, it was clear from his description of this key to "the miracle of naked existence" as "rather dull and uninteresting" that the purpose of my inquiry had escaped him.

The Home Office confirms that mescaline is not on the list of Dangerous Drugs and the British Medical Association agree with Mr. Huxley that the drug is not harmful or habit-forming. But the B.M.A. sounds one note of warning. It seems that people do not all react alike to mescaline. So it is just possible that, after taking a great deal of trouble, one might just be shaken out of one's rut into a state of quite ordinary irritation.

Noxious Weeds

MY inquiries into the cultivation of the mescaline cactus led me into murkier paths and I was surprised to learn that the opium poppy and Indian hemp, or ganja, are cultivated freely in this country.

The former, *papaver somniferum*, is grown as a garden annual; for poppy capsules sold as a remedy by herbalists, for bird-seed mixtures, and for decorating confectionery. Hemp, *cannabis sativa*, the mere possession of which means, in Jamaica for instance, imprisonment and twelve strokes of the Tamarind switch, is grown for the decorative value of its leaves and also occurs widely as a casual weed.

In the nineteenth century opium was actually produced in England and, according to contemporary analysis, had a higher morphine content than Turkey opium. But Indian hemp has found no more sinister use than as an angler's bait so potent that its use is considered unsporting by orthodox fishermen.

A Romantic Account

CORRESPONDENCE, in that excellent French illustrated weekly "Paris-Match," regarding the origins of French motor-car firms has culminated in the discovery of an historic bill from the Panhard Company to Balzac.

Balzac, who always liked to travel in style, hired a light hooded carriage known as a *calèche* from Panhard and, accompanied by his faithful valet, Auguste, travelled (last week 120 years ago) from Paris to Vienna to rendezvous with his beloved Eveline de Hanska.

The journey took ten days and cost M. Balzac 400 francs, with 20 francs added for damage to the "lampions."

Twelve-minute Alibi

ACCORDING to the American A. Spalding Company, during an afternoon's golf on an eighteen-hole course, only an average of twelve minutes is actually spent "playing golf," i.e., addressing and completing the shots over eighteen holes.

Who Sneaks There?

THE jack-boots of the steel-helmeted West German Frontier Corps who stand guard outside Dr. Adenauer's chancellery in Bonn have been equipped with rubber soles in order not to disturb the work of the chancellery when the guard is changed.

When M. Pinay, the French Foreign Minister, noticed this fact he commented: "Next time we shan't even hear them coming."